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Hearts by Freight

By Eleanor Williams Youmans

(Copyright, 1910, by Associated Literary Press.)

"Really, you must not walk with me, Mr. Cunningham. You know the penalty."

"What! After trailing you all the way from the campus? After hanging about for two hours waiting for you to come out of that house? What kept you so long in there?"

"My graduating gown. I was having a fitting. But, Mr. Cunningham, the hour is too late for—"

"Now, see here, Miss Ferris, it's too late for a girl to go alone past those freight yards—it's not safe even early in the evening with hobos coming in on every train. I'll drop behind as soon as we're past, if it will please you; but you needn't worry, for this is the night of Stuff's faculty spread. Everybody's there from Prexy to Brains Bowers."

"Why do you boys call some of the professors such horrid names?"

"Who, Stuffeld and Bowers? Why, they like it. Sure, they do. I can prove it. You remember—"

"Sh-h-h, I hear some one."

"I don't."

"Hush, they're there, on the other side of that car—no, this one. Perhaps it's a tramp. Oh, Mr. Cunningham, it sounds like—Oh, mercy!"

"It is! Prexy, or I'm a goat! Well, I'll be—"

From beyond a box car on their right came distinctly, in nervous accents, the words:

"I suggest that we wait, Prof. Bowers; that engine is approaching with considerable speed."

"Come on across, Dr. Cramer," answered a second voice; "plenty of time."

"Heavens, they're coming around on this side," Cunningham suddenly realized the brilliancy of the moonlight. Recognition would be certain. "Here," he whispered in desperation, "climb in here, quick!"

Laying vigorous hold of the girl he swung her up to the open door of the empty car, whither he speedily followed.

Creeping noiselessly into the shadow, they waited, fearing to breathe. From an engine somewhere in the yard issued loud, leisurely grunts.

"Poor Little Girl," He Muttered.

Presently Dr. Cramer spoke again, this time within a foot of the door of their hiding place.

"If you do not mind, Prof. Bowers," he said, "I should like to wait and watch them pick up this car."

Cunningham arose to take an investigating peep to see what car was meant when there was a terrific crash, and, lying prone upon his face, he knew. Scrambling up, he groped about in the gloom for the girl. The car had begun to move rapidly by the time he had found her and raised her to her feet. Grasping her arm, he started toward the door when a second collision, harder, it seemed, than the first, brought them groveling to the hard, gritty floor.

A second time Cunningham, like truth, arose; but with extreme caution. Getting upon his knees, he reached forth his hands for his companion. She was quite near and trembling violently. The motion of the car grew slower and finally stopped.

"Come," he urged, getting to his feet and trying to lift her. "We can get out now."

"I'm afraid!" she cried, making no effort to rise. The next moment the car jerked dizzily, and, with loud clanking and rattle, began jolting slowly over the rails.

"We must jump!" he shouted above the noise, dragging her to the door.

"No!" she screamed, terrified, "I'm afraid!"

Tearing herself from his grasp, she sank down in the patch of moonlight that shone in through the open doorway and buried her face in her lap. Cunningham's impulse was to drop her to the ground by main force; but when he lay hold upon her shaking shoulders what he actually did was to drop cross-legged beside her and lift her golden, curly head until it rested upon his shoulder, holding it there while the train continued to gain speed and the complaining rattle and clank grew into a furious roar.

"Poor little girl," he muttered remorsefully. "What an awful scrape I've got you into."

He knew that she could not hear

him in the midst of that hideous din, but as if in mute testimony to his words, she held up two small palms, scratched and bleeding.

"Oh, my darling!" in his pain and regret the words slipped out unheeded. Finding a handkerchief, he tore it in strips and awkwardly wound the pieces about her hands. Then, there being no other way to secure the bandages, he laid one palm upon the other and held them so. During this operation it was necessary for Miss Ferris to sit up in the jolting, swaying car unsupported, but when, upon finishing the task, Cunningham again slipped his arm about her shoulders and drew her head to its former position, she made no resistance.

A wonderful idea occurred to him. A blazing, beautiful idea.

"Sylvia," he stammered, as rapidly as the beating of his heart would permit, "there's a jolly good way out of this for us if you—if you'll marry me." He trembled before his own audacity and rested his burning cheek an instant against the cool softness of her hair, forgetting the road that reduced his words to mere, fluttering breaths.

Sylvia lifted her head; Cunningham saw her lips moving and bent till her lashes swept his face, but still he doubted that he heard aright.

"What is that awful smell?" she repeated, finally making herself audible.

So shocked was Cunningham that he had little breath with which to sniff. There did seem to be an odor—now that it had come to notice—overpowering, but familiar.

"Phosphate!" he shouted in answer, relieving his discomfiture by strength of lung. "It's fertilizer!"

Sylvia nodded and dipped her dainty nose into the rose that decorated his lapel. Cunningham decided that conversation was out of the question, and there was no use getting fretty about it. The train would have to stop some time. Meanwhile, with both hands comfortably full, he mapped out his course of procedure.

The train stopped sooner than he had expected, but at a lonely water tank without visible light or habitation.

"No escape here," he reported, looking down the pebbly slope of an embankment which fell away from the door of their prison full thirty feet.

"Oh, dear, that horrible odor," sighed the girl.

Cunningham struck a match. The car was empty but for themselves and the smell of the fertilizer which enveloped the air like a loathsome, suffocating blanket.

"How can we ever explain?" she lamented.

Cunningham saw his opening and rushed in. "There's only one thing to do," he remarked in an elaborately matter-of-fact tone, "and that is to get married."

"What?" Sylvia's voice rose to a high note of astonishment.

"Is it so distasteful to you?" he asked, affecting a coolness he did not feel. Then, reseating himself and taking the bandaged hands:

"I have been trying for two years to muster the courage to propose to you. You must have seen how hard hit I am."

"You never said anything."

"I'm saying it now; and—you—care a little, don't you, Sylvia? It's the best way."

Sylvia neither answered nor shrank from his embrace.

"I have no idea where this train is taking us," he continued, "but we shall come to a town before long, that's certain. Ministers and licenses are easily found. You have no parents to consult, nor have I, and neither of us are a minor. After we're married we will come back and tell Prexy all about it. He'll stand for it, I think; he's a fine fellow," he finished stoutly.

Sylvia began to cry, silently at first then a little harder.

"We shall lose our diplomas, I just know," she sobbed, snuggling her cheek against his vest pocket in a rather comfortable manner, nevertheless.

"What is a piece of old sheepskin, anyway," he challenged, "compared with our having each other?"

"I don't know, Mr. Cunningham," very tremulously.

"Call me 'Tom,' dear."

"Tom," more tremulously still—then, with a nervous giggle, "dear."

The locomotive, having drunk its fill, now pounded on with loud, triumphant toots and sonorous puffs of exultation, bearing its blissful cargo into the golden unknown.

All the Difference.

One of the finest examples of "pawky" humor is placed to the credit of an old gardener who was in the service of Admiral of the Fleet Sir Alexander Milne, who was in his time a member of the writer's congregation. The admiral, who died a few years ago in his ninetieth year, was a grand old man, full of goodness and kindness, but a strict disciplinarian. The gardener having omitted to do something which he had been told to do, his master said to him:

"When I was on board ship I would have had you put in irons for disobedience."

The old gardener was not much perturbed at the idea, but, leaning on his spade, replied:

"Aye, maybe, Sir Alexander; but when ye were on board ship ye had a hunder men tae doe as Job, an' noo ye hae as man-tae-doe as a hunder jobs."

Natural Result.

"I wonder why that song is still hanging on?"

"I suppose it is because of the swing it has."

Hopkinsville Market Quotations.

Corrected Feb. 14, 1912.

RETAIL GROCERY PRICES.

Country lard, good color and clean 12½c per pound.

Country bacon, 12½c per pound.

Black-eyed peas, \$4.00 per bushel.

Country shoulders, 10c per pound

Country hams, 18c per pound.

Irish potatoes, \$1.60 per bushel.

Northern eating Rural potatoes \$1.60 per bushel

Texas eating onions, \$1.75 per bushel

Red eating onions, \$1.75 per bushel

Dried Navy beans, \$3.25 per bushel

Cabbage, 4 cents a pound.

Dried Lima beans, 10c per pound.

Country dried apples, 12½c per pound

Daisy cream cheese, 25c per pound

Full cream brick cheese, 25c per pound

Full cream Limberger cheese, 25c per pound

Popcorn, dried on ear, 2c per pound.

Fresh Eggs 35c per doz

Choice lots fresh, well-worked country butter, in pound prints, 30c.

FRUITS.

Lemons, 25c per dozen

Navel Oranges, 30c, 40c, per doz

Bananas, 15c and 20c doz

New York State apples \$5.00 to \$6.00 per barrel

Cash Price Paid For Produce.

POULTRY.

Dressed hens, 12½c per pound

Dressed cocks, 7c per pound

Five hens, 10c per pound; live cocks, 1c per pound; live turkeys, 13c per pound

ROOTS, HIDES, WOOL AND TALLOW.

Prices paid by wholesale dealers to butchers and farmers:

Roots—Southern ginseng, \$5.75 lb

"Golden Seal" yellow root, \$1.35 lb

Mayapple, 3½; pink root, 12c and 13c

Tallow—No. 1, 4½; No. 2, 4c.

Wool—Burry, 10c to 17c; Clear Grease, 21c, medium, tub washed, 23c to 30c; coarse, dingy, tubwashed, 18c.

Feathers—Prime white goose, 50c; dark and mixed old goose, 15c to 30c; gray mixed, 15c to 30c; white duck, 22c to 35c, new.

Hides and Skins—These quotations are for Kentucky hides. Southern green hides 8c. We quote assorted lots dry flint, 12c to 14c. 9-10 better demand.

Dressed geese, 11c per pound for choice lots, live 5½

Fresh country eggs, 25 cents per dozen

Fresh country butter 25c lb.

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No. 1 timothy hay, \$17.00

Choice clover hay, \$16.00

No. 1 clover hay, \$16.00

Clean, bright straw hay, \$5.00

Alfalfa hay, \$18.00

White seed oats, 55c

Black seed oats, 55c

Mixed seed oats, 48c

No. 2 white corn, 55c

No. 2 mixed corn, 55c

Winter wheat bran, \$26.00.

Chops, \$3.50.

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